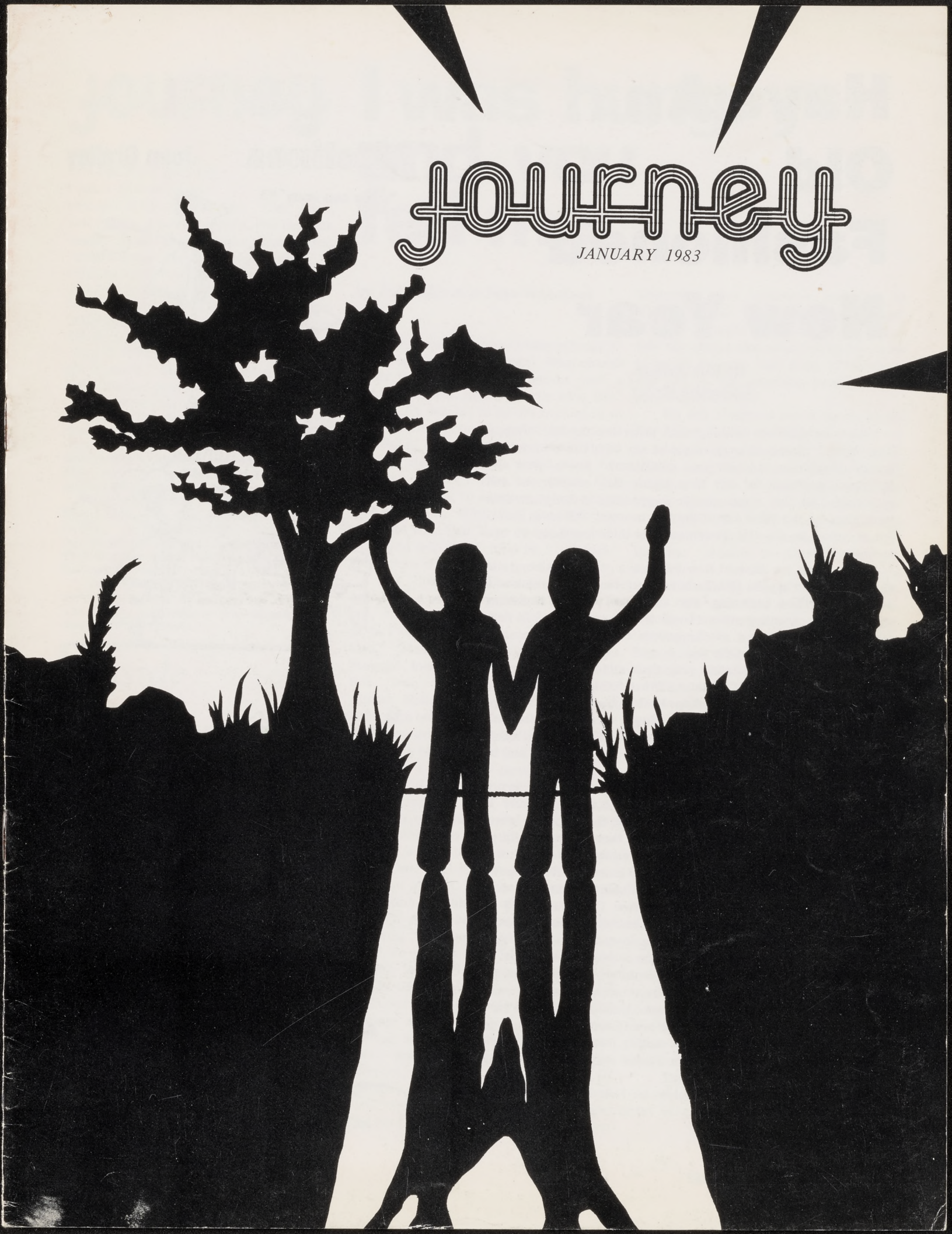
journey

JANUARY 1983



Have An Old Fashioned New Year

By Bob Arthur
Collective Writer

We have all been wishing each other the familiar "Happy New Year." Some of us have grown up with the tradition of hearty celebration and new year resolutions. But is there any Scriptural guidance for our New Year's Day celebrations and activities? We find seven specific happenings in Scripture that took place on the "first day of the first month." All seven events are recorded in the Old Testament. Is there anything we can learn from them?

Most often we think of New Year's as a personal celebration; and so it was in several Old Testament references. We think of a new year as a new beginning. Part and parcel of a new beginning should be the cleansing process to allow for a clean start. In Ezra 10:17 we find mention of the people of Jerusalem cleansing themselves by the first of the year.

Their particular pollution was their attachment to foreign spouses, and they got rid of them. What foreign spouses do we have in our lives? Could we perhaps be finding ourselves espoused to money, a job, family members, causes, or methods that are leading us away from our true devotion to God? New Year's Day is a good time to rid ourselves of those "foreign spouses," and be open to God's leading in our lives.

We also find that the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month (Exodus 40:2, 17). What was the tabernacle? It was a portable sanctuary able to be wherever the people were. Do we have our own personal sanctuary that we carry with us wherever we go? What better time to establish in our lives a determination to worship every day in our lives wherever we go?

We need not go to an established temple or church to worship God. We each have our letter from God we should be reading each day, and we have our own built-in telephone system to talk with (not just to) God. Let us determine to set up that tabernacle in our lives and use it each day wherever we may be.

The New Year is a time for new ventures. We sometimes get caught up in our routine, and feel quite secure closed in away from the disturbing tempests about us. Noah chose New Year's Day to remove the covering of the ark (Genesis 8:13), and to begin his new venture into the new world. Is it not time for each of us to remove our cloaks of security and venture forth into the new realms God has prepared for us?

Ezra left Babylon for Jerusalem on New Year's Day (Ezra 7:9) to begin his new project: the rebuilding of the temple in

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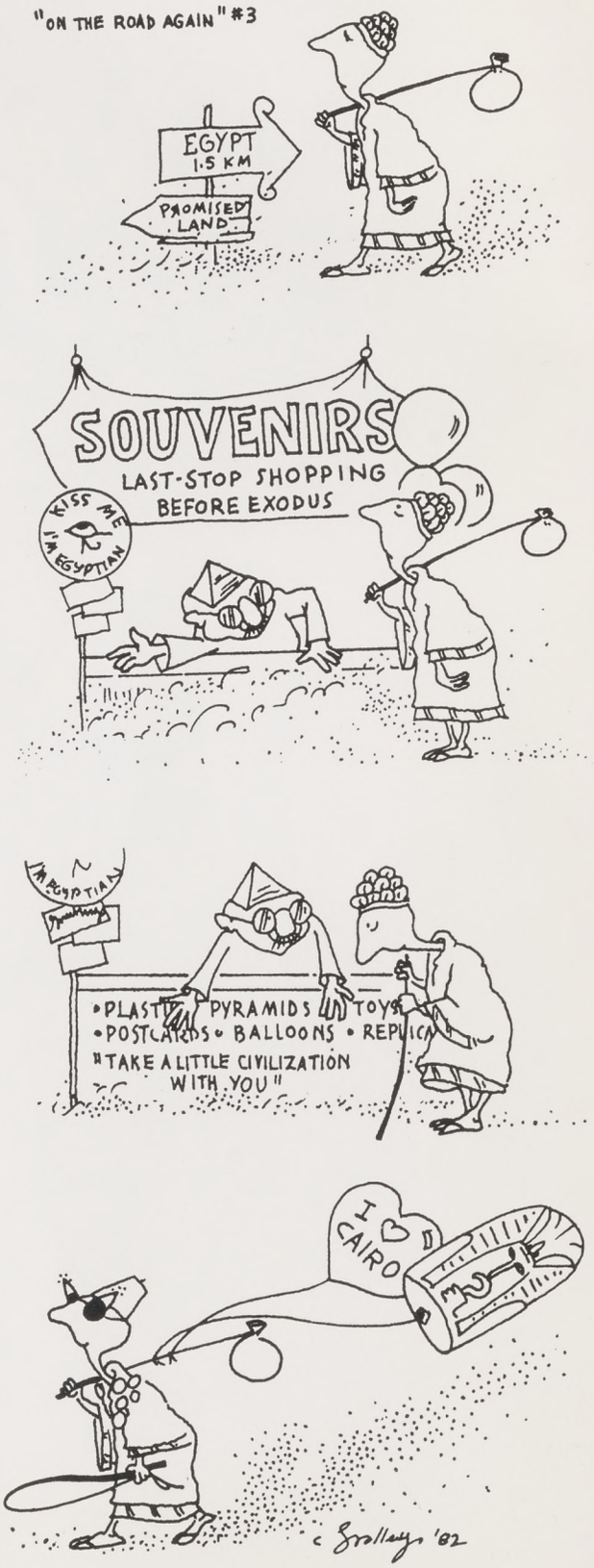
Lifelines **Jean Gralley**



journey

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COVER: Rick O'Dell

I was hungry and you fed me

by Joe Miller and Joan Wakeford

Give away an entire Sunday offering?!? The preacher had gone nuts! What church in its right mind would consider such a thing? And yet, that is exactly what MCC Austin, TX decided to do one evening in an open board meeting attended by a record number of congregational members. It was already July. August would have five Sundays, so let's give our entire fifth Sunday offering to someone or something that needed it. Why? Well, the Bible says over and over that if we "plant the seed" that God will richly bless us "100 fold." Here's how it happened!

For Liverpool, England, it was an answer to a prayer, a response to a heart's cry, "Give us a small sign that we are part of a Fellowship that is united in Your love." This prayer travelled two seas and dropped down in Austin, on the heart of Rev. Joan Wakeford, Pastor of MCC Austin. Wakeford felt God was putting a burden on her heart to tell her congregation that it needed to give to others in order to receive the blessings that God had promised. Wakeford, a missionary herself for the past 25 years, felt God was saying, "Reach out to missions, to areas known as World Church Extension." The mail brought even another sign that this idea truly was of God in the form of the publication, *Reach Out*, published by UFMCC Press as the result of MCC Pomona who named the publication and thought of the idea.

MCC Austin became excited about the upcoming "5th Sunday" but who or what would we do with the $200-300 we would receive? After all, it would surely be the smallest offering of the year considering it would not be used for the church. Prayer meetings and phone calls began, service planning was in progress, and the answer came -- again in the form of *Reach Out* -- Liverpool, England. Liverpool, with its unemployment rate so high, only a small group, and nobody in Austin knew anybody in Liverpool; why would God choose Liverpool? A television program for UFMCC would make much more sense. Whether it made sense or not, God had told the church that whatever money came in would be split—half given to Liverpool and half to the television program being planned for UFMCC.

We felt Liverpool stood out in *Reach Out* just as though it had been printed for us to read. By giving to the T.V. program, MCCA could have a small part in the call of Jesus to "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." So, the stage was set!

August 29th: The congregation met for breakfast prior to services to pray for the first "Mission Service." There was excitement in the air, yet, we were nervous – what if nobody comes? What if nobody gives? Oh well, God knows best and we feel good! The service was beautiful, the Gospel was read in Spanish, Japanese, English and Finnish and over 90 people showed up. It was exciting.

Then came time for the offering. The offertory was "The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power."

The offering -- $968!! The jubilation almost ruined the already frail stained glass windows in our little, very old Congregational Church where we worship. Then, a member came forth and said, "here's enough to make it an even one thousand dollars!" Praise the Lord!!!

The "uniting" had begun in Austin, but what of Liverpool? The people in Liverpool had no idea of what was taking place several thousand miles away. Most of them probably had no idea that Austin even existed unless they happened to catch an episode of "Dallas" when J.R. happened to visit the state capitol.

What was even more exciting was that Liverpool would not find out until they received the check for $500 and the picture of the Austin congregation taken after services on "Missions Sunday."

Allow me at this time to share exerpts from letters from Liverpool upon receiving

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Western Clergy Conference Provides Healing, Renewal

by Candace Naisbitt
Pastor MCC Seattle

This year's Western Clergy Conference was held November 16-19 at MCC San Francisco, and was well-attended by about 70 clergy and friends.

The schedule for the conference included an introductory small-groups session, men's sharing, women's sharing, student clergy inquiry with CCCC, Ken Martin's "Clergy As Sex-Counselor" workshop, Jim Glyer's workshop on feeding the hungry, a seminar on the "Church During Hard Times" by Dr. Lloyd Hartley, an inquiry time with the Board of Elders, and an opening and closing communion service and three evening worship services.

Additional agenda are brought each year by everyone attending. The blending of the personal agenda with the proposed schedule is a fascinating dynamic and has the potential for creating a wonderland for a research project in human behavior.

We arrive with an assortment of needs to be met, expectations of healing and renewal, anxieties and frustrations to vent. Some are in need of being held and uplifted. Others want to share their joy and achievements and be very sociable. And, believe it or not, some do attend for the pure purpose of enjoying the schedule sent out by the Fellowship offices.

Everyone does not attend everything on the schedule. After all, the personal agenda is not always met entirely by the groups, workshops or seminars. Some spend a portion of the Conference actively healing , reaching out, being close, giving and receiving gifts as needed.

Exciting things evolve from the schedule. A rumor circulated that the men's sharing may be the birth of constructive and vulnerable exchanges in the future to encourage the growth and trust process of our brothers.

Woman discussed quite openly their diversive understanding of the need for feminist approaches in ministry and dispelled (hopefully) some of the fears of others regarding such outreaches.

The exchange of food sharing programs in our local churches gave added insight into our ministry to the communities at large. Tensions regarding the UFMCC were relieved by the Board of Elders inquiry session.

Ken Martin aroused the interest and enthusiasm of those in attendance for the "Clergy As Sex-Counselors" to such a degree that he is being invited to attend district conferences and churches to present similar programs. He will also be at Eastern Clergy Conference.

The worship services were an experience blessed by God. Rev. Jane Carl of MCC Pomona encouraged us to search for angels and not give ultimate power to demons. Rev. Don Eastman of MCC relieved the frustration for the self-imposed concept of being a "super-pastor." Rev. David Pelletier's celebration service was one of healing, sharing and reflection. Rev. Michael England of MCC San Francisco and Michael Mank, Elder, shared their gifts by leading our voices on piano and organ.

MCC San Francisco provided a warm and loving atmosphere. The members of both Eureka Street and Golden Gate MCC were very hospitable in housing us. Much appreciation is sent to them.

For the most part, the clergy and friends leave the conference having grown in their needs at least to the point of a beginning of affirmation by God's spirit being poured out and by peer support.

Some may call it a mystery, others by sheer accident. The bottom line is: Clergy Conferences are necessary as a vehicle for support, a sounding board, learning and for the confirmation that one's concerns/needs are not isolated, they are shared by many.

Ordained clergyperson dies

The Reverend John W. Pfleiderer, staff member of Metropolitan Community Church San Francisco, died December 15. 1982. He had been ordained just four weeks prior to his death by the Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry during the Western Clergy Conference in San Francisco.

Pfleiderer's Ordination was made possible by a waiver granted by the Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee due to special circumstances.. He had already started to apply for a license. When Pfleiderer expressed to Elder Michael Mank a desire to be Ordained in our Fellowship before his death, the necessary steps were taken to fulfill this wish. On Wednesday evening, November 17, 1982, John became a member of the Ordained Clergy of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

Pfleiderer began attending MCC in 1972, but his desire to become a clergyperson in our Fellowship began this past summer. During the few months that Pfleiderer was on the staff, he earned the love and respect of the San Francisco congregation. He was being considered for a salaried position when it was learned that he had a brain tumor and had only weeks to live. Pfleiderer chose to live those few weeks in as normal a manner as possible. He preached his last sermon just three days before his death.

Rev. Pfleiderer was not a stranger to the Christian ministry. A graduate of Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, Pfleiderer was an Ordained Clergy of the United Methodist Church for 12 years and served two congregations in Montana. From 1978 to the summer of 1982, he was the Pastor of a United Church of Christ congregation in San Francisco.

Commission On The Laity

by Jackie Walker
Assistant Chair
Commission on the Laity

At the Government Structures and Systems meeting held in Dallas, Texas, the Commission on the Laity came up with some goals for enabling the laity of UFMCC to deal with responsibilities as lay people.

We put a great deal of focus on the lay delegate. This person or persons represent their churches in important decision making processes on both a district and Fellowship level. Often lay delegates accept the position not knowing the responsibilities and having little previous experience. The COL would like to provide workshops and informational packets to help inform lay delegates of their rights and responsibilities. We would also like to propose some by-law changes and changes in present practices to enable lay people to gain experience and continuity of representation.

The COL is working on a workshop for Lay Delegates. It would include things like: the use of Roberts Rules of Order, the function of delegates, by-laws and what they mean, and a packet of information on various commissions and committees in the Fellowship. We also hope to help delegates know what their responsibilities are and how they can meet those responsibilities.

Along the lines of strengthening the lay delegate, the COL is planning to support a by-law change that would increase the term of office to two years. Lay delegates would be elected at the congregational meeting following General Conference and would serve through the next General Conference. Having a two year term would facilitate preparation and training of lay delegates.

Most delegates would then have experienced two District Conferences before General Conference. It would also allow time for training workshops to be offered to delegates. A two year term would provide continuity of representation.

The COL would like to facilitate a Monograph Series of "How To" courses as a method of enabling lay participation. Some courses that have been suggested are: "How To Be A Worship Coordinator," "How To Be A Church Treasurer," "How To Be A Deacon."

The commission would also like to work on the definition of the "Priesthood of All Believers." What does it mean? How does it apply to the laity of UFMCC as a whole and on an individual basis?

The commission is planning to sponsor another "Open Forum" at General Conference similar to the one held in Houston. This forum is to be held after the start of the conference rather than the day before. We are also sponsoring a Lay Delegates' Caucus to be held during General Conference. This is another way of educating lay delegates.

It is the opinion of the COL that student clergy are technically clergy and as such should not represent the laity on the COL as lay delegates, or as lay representatives to Fellowship or district commissions and committees.

According to Article IV of UFMCC by-laws, student clergy are clergy. These people will be moving on in their ministry. They will not be around their particular churches or districts two or three years down the road. Having them represent the laity disrupts the continuity of representation which I believe is important to lay people. Also serving in positions reserved for lay people, student clergy are depriving lay people of experience. Experience which can be valuable to the church and district in the future when the student clergy may have been called elsewhere.

The question of student clergy status has been around for as long as I can remember. We thought we were addressing this problem when GSS rewrote Article IV of the by-laws and included student clergy as clergy.

One solution to the cry that student clergy are, "neither fish nor fowl," may be the seating of student clergy as official observers in the Clergy House at District and General Conferences.

I would like to have student clergy feel that they belong to one group or the other. But I feel that now is the time in this Fellowship where we should be strengthening the laity. The laity is just developing an identity of their own. The laity should be encouraged and strengthened. I view the trend toward giving student clergy lay positions as a way of taking from the laity rather than a building up.

MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ISSUES POSITIVE STATEMENT SUPPORTING LESBIANS, GAY MEN

The Minnesota Council of Churches, representing 45% of the state's religious population, recently issued a strong statement in support of Lesbian and Gay men.

The statement encouraged members to not only support legislation that protects the rights of Lesbians and Gay men but also to welcome Lesbians and Gay men into their congregations.

The council's 55 member board of directors unanimously approved the statement which condones homosexuality.

The statement says, "There may be creative and whole expressions of one's sexuality at various levels in relationships between men and women, between men and other men, and between women and other women."

The Rev. Willis J. Merriman, executive director of the council said, "As an ecumenical organization, we are dedicated to the unity of the church. However, there can be no unity of the church without unity of humankind. The action of the Minnesota Council of Churches, in the words of the statement, can symbolize a coming home for some very important persons."

AFL-CIO INDUSTRIAL UNIONS ENDORSE GAY CIVIL RIGHTS

WASHINGTON, DC - The industrial Unions Department (IUD) of the AFL-CIO enacted a Gay rights policy resolution at its annual convention held in Detroit, MI.

The resolution which calls for an end to discrimination on the basis of sexual preference in public accomodations and employment, was introduced by American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) International Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy and was passed by a voice vote.

Lucy indicated that this was his first attempt to include Gay rights in the national civil rights policies of the IUD, the largest of the AFL-CIO's eight organizational departments. Lucy praised his colleagues in supporting Gay rights as "an important step in gaining freedom and building human dignity for all citizens of this nation."

profile

by Paula J. Schoenwether
Collective Editor

In MCC we have many talented, amazing and interesting people but the problem is that no one ever hears about them outside their own community.

And, sometimes, people we think we know well, we only know professionally. "Profile" will be a column about people and who they are.

Our first "Profile" is about Kathleen Meadows and Freda Smith. We know Freda Smith most often as Rev. Elder and Kathleen as Freda's significant other. But, these two dynamic women are much more than elder and significant other.

One of the most important things that these two share is their love for "Mother Lode," 11½ acres of land. It is land filled with wild grapes, hills and a creek. Located near Sacramento, this retreat area is within a 50 mile radius of where gold was first mined.

Together Freda and Kathleen have planted 26 fruit trees, seen a spring dug and a water pump installed.

"I'm a country person," Freda said. "I was raised near Pocatello, Idaho. It was primitive. We slept on the ground and listened to the coyotes. I like the feel of the land and to work with my hands."

Kathleen explained, "It's a retreat for us and we have dreams for the land. We hope to build on it."

Sharing their land is important and Freda said that she enjoys seeing people she likes enjoy it also. "The land is wonderful, spiritual," she said.

It is obvious both women are individuals and independent even though Freda said that because they are both Scorpios they have many of the same qualities.

"Learning to eat together was a big adjustment for us. Kathleen cooks for 12 and cooks roasts. Philosophically I'm a vegetarian."

While Freda spends her spare time writing poetry and reading, Kathleen spends her time with music. She plays a steel guitar and practices regularly. "On Tuesdays a group of us can be found jammin'," she said. The new group worked on Christmas carols for the tree trimming party at MCC River City and made their debut there. "I feel like I can gauge my accomplishments on that (music). It shows what I've done," Kathleen explained.

Music is so important to her that when asked what she wanted to be when she grew up she said, "I'd love to be the female counterpart of Buddy Emmons, only I'd sing Gospel music." I had to ask who Emmons is. He was voted by his peers to be the greatest steel guitarist.

"I'm working on 'Blues in the Night' and I'm pretty good," Kathleen admitted.

Freda, oldest child in her family, finds time to be lazy and likes to stack pillows around her, curl up in bed with a bunch of books and read all day.

"I'm a terrible book worm and I've been writing since I can remember. It's been a natural expression all my life. I used to hoard scraps of paper, even toilet paper, so I could write," Freda said.

Although no one ever saw what Freda wrote, she said it was a necessary part of her life. So she wrote and wrote.

Both women were asked to describe themselves. Kathleen, who is 53 said, "I'm independent, I'm self-sufficient and I make my own life. I'm autonomous apart from Freda. I'm a whole person. I also have a good sense of humor."

Kathleen talked about loving to be with friends and about liking to have a good time. She also talked of how she got to be who she is today.

"I used to think I could handle everything and then one day I couldn't handle something. I got into therapy and really learned who I was and what I wanted out of life."

Because of therapy, Kathleen says she thinks she can understand others better. In fact, she says one of her greatest assets is that she is quick to reach for an understanding of people rather than to be judgmental.

Freda said that when she described herself she thought she should be humble and modest but instead she opted for honesty. (It was a hard question for Freda.) "I'm a visionary, a catalyst, calling forth others. My greatest asset is my faith, my ability to trust, to believe and to love. When I grow up I want to be the "Grand Old Woman Of The Movement,' " she said. Freda also said that for 14 years she has believed that was her destiny. She explained "The Movement" included both the Fellowship and feminism for her.

"The older I get the more I become myself. I'm becoming that time of my life where my identity is," the 47-year-old woman said.

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Freda Smith with her all time favorite woman, her mother Mary V. Smith.

PROFILE continued from page 6

"Coming out as a Lesbian was a devastating experience for Freda. "I fell in love with my best friend when I was 16. She was 19. I was not psychologically prepared. I was in the Salvation Army and I couldn't handle it so I ran to Houston. I used to get down on my knees and pray that God would change me. I could not deal and I felt separated from God."

She explained that there was a reconciliation with God and she had a feeling of acceptance. "I thought I was cured but when I saw my best friend again I knew I wasn't. I would have followed her into hell and that's what it seemed like . . . hell."

An Ezra Pound poem, "Hanger For My Home" showed Freda she was not alone.

Kathleen also spoke of growing older. "I'm more mellow. I feel deeply about things that are important to me but I don't agonize so much if they don't go as I planned," she said.

Both women talked about important aspects of their family, mainly Macho and Cloud Zerilli. Macho is an 8-year-old poodle who regularly puts on dog shows. He also recently bit the gardener who is now suing for $30,000. Freda said, "Macho tries very hard to be a Great Dane because so many expectations are placed on him." Kathleen appreciates Macho because he is such a good watch dog.

Freda is quite sure that Cloud, A Siamese, is a Lesbian. She drove a prospective suitor to the top of the bookcases and refused to have anything to do with him. While Freda describes Cloud as an aggressive, assertive cat who likes guitar picks, Kathleen says Cloud is independent and not cuddly. "Freda says I should starve Cloud into submission, but I couldn't do that!"

Neither woman hesitated for a moment when asked who was their all time favorite woman. Kathleen said Freda and Freda said her mother.

"I admire my mother's spirit. Her unconquerable spirit. My mother was orphaned when she was nine. During the 30's she went to college majoring in math and science. She married my father who was a wild-eyed radical."

Her mother, Mary Smith, originally worked for Aerojet in data reduction and was promoted because she figured out what was wrong with the firing system for the moon rockets. She earned the rank of scientist/mathematician working for the Navy until she retired.

"I'm very proud of that because of the difficulties she surmounted both in working her way through high school and college and in starting in at a low-level entry position after raising a family," Freda explained.

Her great grandmother was and still is an important woman in Freda's life. She was a Nazarene preacher and lived until she was 87. "I have a bond with her. She was a person of power, courage and wisdom.

"She was a suffragette and I have a picture of her going West in a wagon. Her diary tells about a woman friend who she said she loved like Jonathan loved David."

"Freda is my all time favorite woman. She lives what she preaches. Her daily life is a sermon. I've never heard her say a bad thing about anyone or put anyone down. She's always ready to give a helping hand."

Kathleen said that she would like to throw a huge outrageous party for Freda's 50th birthday. 'I'd like to spend money as if it were water. I'd like a champagne fountain, sculptured ice and have music and dancing and all kinds of food."

Freda said, "I'd like to build a tree house and a barn, write a novel and raise dried flowers."

ABOVE: Kathleen Meadows with Macho.
BELOW: Ms. Cloud Zerilli.

If you know someone for "Profile" please send us their name and a way in which we can contact them. Include a brief statement why you would like them considered Or you can recommend yourself or write an article yourself. Please send all information to JOURNEY. Pictures are real important.

Books — a review by nancy wilson

VOICES IN THE NIGHT: WOMEN SPEAKING ABOUT INCEST

Edited by Toni A.H. McNaron and Yarrow Morgan, 1982, Cleis Press, PO Box 8281, Minneapolis, MN 55408

"This book is about breaking silence."

So begins the introduction to a very important new book, *VOICES IN THE NIGHT.* The book is a collection of creative writing responses by Lesbians who are in the process of healing from the wounds of childhood incest.

It is estimated that as many as 1/3 of all women are survivors of incestuous relationships, some lasting for most of the woman's childhood. My experience as a pastor and counselor in the Lesbian and Gay community is that that figure may be conservative. I also feel sure that incest is not necessarily on the increase -- but that as women break the silence, there is a new visibility of incest survivors. In the class I teach on "Feminist Theory" one half of the women in the class admitted to being incest survivors.

In reviewing new books about incest, I have found most of them to be one person accounts, often bordering on the titillating and sensational. Titles such as *KISS DADDY GOODNIGHT* have that teasing, quasi-pornographic tone that reinforces the view that incest should be a taboo subject, at the mention of which we cluck our tongues and raise our eyebrows in embarrassment. It may sell more copies with such a title -- which aids in breaking the silence! -- but it also may trivialize as "kinky" what is *not* an isolated tragedy here or there, but a national disgrace: a travesty of violence and emotional brutality aimed primarily at women (97%) primarily by men (over 99%).

VOICES IN THE NIGHT is a welcome change from this genre of books. It was written in the context of a group of women sharing a feminist perspective of the ways in which incest had hurt them and rendered them powerless. This book is about healing and taking back one's power first, and primarily, by breaking the silence, by "coming out" as an incest survivor.

The writings are entirely experiential, gut-wrenching, angry, sad, lonely and powerful. If you yourself are an incest survivor, read the book when you are ready to grieve and open up to your own feelings. Make sure you have the time to read it and absorb it (not on the bus or subway or between meetings, classes, home and work), and a support system (understanding women friends, an incest survivors group, a therapist) to safely ventilate and explore your own feelings, without being interrupted, dismissed or rushed.

If you are a pastor or a counselor, read this book with gratitude as one who is privileged to learn from other's pain and struggle to have pain healed. Embrace its insights and authenticity, and its deep respect for the amazing will-to-be-healed that is in all of us, women and men, gay and straight, victim or perpetrator.

Or read it for a friend. Someone you know and love is a survivor of the crime of incest. Your increased appreciation and sensitivity may provide one of the keys to breaking the silence.

The volume even includes the rare instance of mother-daughter incest and the special pain and feelings of helplessness that engenders.

Yarrow, one of the editors, describes what incest did to her:

"-- It alienated me from my parents at an age when they defined the possibilities of the world outside.

-- It put me in a stance of 'other' in relation to my family and the outside world.

-- It alienated me from both my body and the feelings I had in it.

-- It made me believe that either I was 'evil' (bacause this happened to me) or the world was 'evil' because my parents defined the parameters of that world) or both. These became unconscious assumptions on which I acted for years.

-- It taught me to hate being a woman, to believe that being a woman was synonymous with being an object to be used and abused. This alienated me from myself and other women."

For those of you who may consciously or sub-consciously wonder "why they (Lesbians) are always so angry," those are *some* of the reasons. If it makes *you* angry to read about incest, our journey together may be that much more healing. Think for a moment of the angriest Lesbian you know. And stop and consider that there is every liklihood that she is a survivor of incest or other childhood abuse. And think also that *her anger, expressed and heard* may be the only doorway to her healing.

Terry Wolverton's piece entitled "In Silence Secrets Turn to Lies/Secrets Shared Become Sacred Truth: a performance ritual about incest" deserves special mention as an outstanding expression of the reality of this subject. It was the piece that moved me the most.

Author karen marie christa minns closes her poem "Et Cum Spiritu Tuo" with these words:

"We are the women reclaiming the
children
we used to be
and we will never be ashamed
again."

Amen to that.

Ave

I got a vision of who I might have been

had I not declared myself

one of my Church's queers

or a house faggot for the English profession:

A quiet, arthritic old Episcopalian

winked at me from his pew

where he knelt before Mary,

having come from tea after his lecture

on the rhetoric of *Bleak House*;

and I recognized him,

saw myself as I would have been,

and thanked him for affirming

my sacrifice of him,

my shrill declaration that kept him

from ever becoming more

than a figment of my imagination.

Louie Crew

journey

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lect their present condition. This was nted with the fervent wish that it would a very temporary action.

In other business the conference voted attempt to have an official presence" the 1983 Reno Gay Rodeo, and to make Summer Spirituality Retreat a regular ture of non-General Conference years.

The new Northwest District officers l be installed during the 10:30 a.m. vice of MCC San Francisco on Sunday, uary 16th. Rev. Pelletier will preach.

MID ATLANTIC DISTRICT FORMS CARE COMMITTEE

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VOICES IN THE NIGHT: WOMEN SPEAKING ABOUT INCEST

Edited by Toni A.H. McNaron and Yarro
Morgan, 1982, Cleis Press, PO Box 828
Minneapolis, MN 55408

"This book is about breaking silence

So begins the introduction to a ve important new book, *VOICES IN TH NIGHT.* The book is a collection creative writing responses by Lesbians w are in the process of healing from t wounds of childhood incest.

It is estimated that as many as 1/3 all women are survivors of incestuo relationships, some lasting for most of t woman's childhood. My experience as pastor and counselor in the Lesbian a Gay community is that that figure may conservative. I also feel sure that incest not necessarily on the increase -- but th as women break the silence, there is a n visibility of incest survivors. In the clas teach on "Feminist Theory" one half of the women in the class admitted to being incest survivors.

In reviewing new books about incest, I have found most of them to be one person accounts, often bordering on the titillating and sensational. Titles such as *KISS DADDY GOODNIGHT* have that teasing, quasi-pornographic tone that reinforces the view that incest should be a taboo subject, at the mention of which we cluck our tongues and raise our eyebrows in embarrassment. It may sell more copies with such a title -- which aids in breaking the silence! -- but it also may trivialize as "kinky" what is *not* an isolated tragedy here or there, but a national disgrace: a travesty of violence and emotional brutality aimed primarily at women (97%) primarily by men (over 99%).

VOICES IN THE NIGHT is a welcome change from this genre of books. It was written in the context of a group of women sharing a feminist perspective of the ways in which incest had hurt them and rendered them powerless. This book is about healing and taking back one's power first, and primarily, by breaking the silence, by "coming out" as an incest survivor.

The writings are entirely experiential, instance of mother-daughter incest and the special pain and feelings of helplessness that engenders.

Yarrow, one of the editors, describes what incest did to her:

"-- It alienated me from my parents at an age when they defined the possibilities of the world outside.

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fellowship news
our journey

MCC WASHINGTON DC PARTICIPATES IN TRADITION

On Friday, December 24th, the Metropolitan Community Church of Washington was invited to participate in a DC Christmas tradition. WMAL radio, Washington's leading daytime AM station and the ABC network affiliate, presents a Christmas program for the community broadcast live from the Concert Hall of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The host of the program is Tom Gauger, one of Washington's leading broadcasters. This year the Rev. Larry Uhrig was asked to deliver a Christmas message and the MCC DC Choir was invited to sing three Christmas selections.

All of the members and friends of MCC are excited about this level of sharing between the gay and non-gay community as well as this important recognition of our ministry in this city.

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MCC San Diego finds new home

By Richard J. Massman
Lay Minister

Bulging at the seams and standing room only becoming a familiar experience, nobody could deny that the congregation had outgrown its facilities. On Sunday, three services were necessary to accommodate all who wanted to worship.

MCC San Diego's Fern Street location was more than sufficient to house a Church family of 100 when it was bought back in 1975. It took a lot of time and hard work to fix it up, and it is a beautiful church - it represents many joyful memories of worship, ministering and Christian fellowship. To some, it seemed that the work had just been completed. And then, all of a sudden, the church was too small to house a rapidly growing congregation under the dynamic pastorate of Rev. David Farrell.

More than a year was spent looking for a new Church home and, in some ways, it was a reluctant search. Nobody was anxious to leave the Fern Street church, for it had lots of personality.

On January 4, 1982, Farrell proposed to the 300-plus-member congregation the covenant, if it is God's will we shall be in our new church by Christmas of this year." This covenant was supported unanimously by the congregation which packed the sanctuary to the rafters.

MCC's Board of Directors assumed responsibility to conduct a search for the new church. It wasn't an easy task. There were not a lot of churches on the market, and the few that were available had to be excluded for being either too small, too big, too far away, or too expensive. Finally, a church which had been considered more than a year previously became available through a purchaser's default in escrow. The Board of Directors moved swiftly into negotiations with the owners to try to get a handle on the situation.

The proposed new church was run down and in need of much repair, restoration and remodeling. However, the size was right to meet current needs and also to provide for growth in coming years. It seated 300 people in the main sanctuary and an additional 150 in the balcony. It also had a large social hall and many rooms for meetings and offices. Located at 30th Street and El Cajon Boulevard, it was close to the heart of the Gay and Lesbian community. The only drawback was that a $145,000 down payment was needed during a five-month escrow period in order to secure the building at a purchase price of $550,000.

The congregation met and discussion was centered around money being tight during tough economic times, and that another group had already failed in their attempts to raise the money to buy the building. The Board of Directors ' recommendation was unanimously in favor of its purchase. The congregation reconfirmed their covenant and unanimously agreed to proceed.

Consequently, Farrell requested that he be relieved of his pastoral duties, except for preaching, to enable him to devote his full time to leading the fund-raising campaign. Rev. Walt Collins, the Assistant Pastor, agreed to double-up and assume Farrell's administrative and other responsibilities and the leave-of-absence was approved.

As mentioned, the fund-raising campaign was kicked off with the prayer, "All things are possible through the power of Jesus Christ our Lord." This was to become the campaign's theme, at least within the Church. Anyone would have had to admit to a lack of faith in Jesus in order to utter any comment like, "It can't be done."

It was clear from the beginning that the congregation's combined individual resources would not be sufficient to raise the total amount of money for the down payment.

More than $40,000 was promised on the first day of the drive - before a request was even made.

In a number of ways, the campaign actually started years ago. MCC San Diego did not conduct itself as an island unto itself. Church leaders and members have engaged in outreach and in an active role in every aspect of the community.

Simultaneous to the internal Church drive, the entire community was blitzed with a fund-raising campaign that was without precedent.

One week before the close of the escrow deadline, about $120,000 had been raised - $25,000 short of what was needed, and as the campaign continued, Farrell scheduled a meeting of the "11th Hour Committee."

At the worship service of Sunday, August 22, it was announced that every penny of the $145,000 down payment had been raised and deposited in the bank on August 18, the date of the closing of escrow. Pandemonium broke loose. It was like being in the winning team's section of a Super Bowl game at the sound of the final gun.

The first worship service would be held on Sunday, September 26 - barely a month away - and it would take a monumental effort to move in, clean and repair the new church to make it suitable for worship. But members of the congregation met the challenge. And it was ready!

A congregation which was used to being split up into three groups finally came together.

With Dedication Sunday scheduled for November 14, a lot of work needed to be done in a short period of time. And it was done!

The Dedication service was grand, and the church was beautiful. Certainly, this was a time to plan a well deserved rest. Not a chance! In a powerful and very moving Dedication sermon, Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey charged the congregation that this day marked the *beginning* of God's work for MCC San Diego, and indeed, it is a great beginning.

As for myself, I arrived on time for the service on Dedication Sunday, but too late to get a seat. My friend and I had to stand in the aisle during the entire service. I couldn't resist leaning over and whispering, "It's time to start looking for a new church."

NEWS UPDATE: God continues to bless MCC San Diego. A member of the community just donated a $35,000 Rogers 750 Organ.

Calvary MCC Does Theology

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Our congregation recently completed a Bible Study course entitled "Doing Your Own Theology," based on the book WORKING OUT YOUR OWN BELIEFS by Douglas E. Wingeier (Abingdon Press, Copyright 1980 - available from Cokesbury Bookstore).

Having completed the course, the group looked at the Fellowship's Statement of Faith, in an effort to apply their recently-acquired knowledge to a meaningful enterprise.

Enclosed herewith is the result of their endeavors, with commentary where appropriate. This is offered in a spirit of sharing our journey of faith with you, in hopes that our thinking will stimulate your thinking and that there might be further dialogue concerning this subject.

Please understand that our intent was neither to disparage nor to supplant the heroic efforts of the FFO, but to contribute to what we perceive to be an on-going attempt to express our collective beliefs with clarity and love.

We invite your comments and other input, and pray that our combined efforts will contribute to the continued growth of God's Realm among all peoples and in all places.

In Christ's love,
Rev. Bruce Hill
for Calvary MCC

FELLOWSHIP STATEMENT OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE:

1. *In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God - our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit - God as our Sustainer.*

2. *That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.*

3. *That Jesus . . .the Christ . . .historically recorded as living some 2000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.*

4. *That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.*

5. *Every person is justified by Grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.*

6. *We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.*

7. *The church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.*

CALVARY MCC's EFFORTS

WE BELIEVE:

1. In one God, all-powerful, ever-present, all-knowing [1], of one essence[2] and three persons: God - the unnamed, unlimited "I AM"[3]; Jesus the Christ;[4] and the Holy Spirit[5].

2. [6] That Jesus . . . the Christ . . . historically recorded as living some 2000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human; and that by being one with God, Jesus had demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise children of God, being made in God's own image.[7]

3. [8] That the Holy Spirit is God present with us for guidance, for comfort and for strength; and that God's love is revealed to us through the Holy Spirit.

4. [9] That the Bible contains the Word of God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and shows forth God to every person through the Law, the Prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ, as recorded in the Gospels.

5. That every person is reconciled to God, by unmerited love, through faith in Jesus, the Christ.[10]

6. That the Realm of God is Divine rule in human society; in the unity of all people under the dominion of God; in the forgiveness of sins, the life of love and prayer,and in grace equal to every need.[11]

7. That the church serves to bring all people to God through Christ, and is the fellowship, for worship, for instruction and for service, of all who are (or seek to be) united to the living Christ.

8. In the final triumph of righteousness, and in the life everlasting.

NOTES:

1. For those, particularly the "unchurched" and/or unlearned who don't have a (clear) understanding of "the omni's" and the meaning of the word "Triune," we have spelled out the meanings of the first and integrated the meaning of the other.

2. Due to some major confusion over the current coinage attached to the meaning of the word "substance," we have substituted "essence," hoping that it will express the same basic concept.

3. In view of Exodus 3:13, 14 and in the interest of not limiting the first Person of the Godhead, we were lead to this method of describing the first Person;

continued on page 12

UFMCC meets with NCC theologians

by R. Adam DeBaugh
Collective Writer

A delegation from the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches met for two days in December with theologians from member Churches of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCC) to discuss areas of agreement surrounding the UFMCC's application for membership in the NCC.

Prayer, honest examination of issues which divide us, and real questions put to the UFMCC on its theology and practice characterized the two day meeting, held at the Alma Matthews house, a United Methodist retreat center in New York's Greenwich Village.

Representing the Fellowship were R. Adam DeBaugh, Co-director of the Department of Ecumenical Relations and Director of the Department of Christian Social Action; Jenny Boyd Bull, Chair of Faith, Fellowship and Order and Pastor of MCC Baltimore; Don Eastman, Chair of Government Structures and Systems Commission and Pastor of MCC Dallas; and Rev. Karen Ziegler, Pastor of MCC New York, member of the Steering Committee of the National Council of Churches of Christ's Commission on Women in Ministry and member of the UFMCC Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee.

The UFMCC also brought two consultants, the Rev. Paul Abels, openly gay pastor of Washington Square United Methodist Church in New York, and Dr. James S. Tinney, Founder of Pentecostal Coalition for Human Rights and pastor of Faith Temple Church in Washington, D.C.

Theologians representing the Lutheran Church in America, Orthodox Churches, Church of the Brethren, United Methodist Church, United Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church made up the National Council delegation.

The NCC's Faith and Order Commission meets in March, 1983, in San Francisco to hear the report from the December Theologians meeting, which will be confidential until the Faith and Order Commission has a chance to study it.

The Fellowship delegation felt very affirmed by the meeting and remarked on the pastoral nature of much of the interaction: "We believe that we were able to communicate a lot about the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches to the National Council of Churches and to begin to dispel many of the myths and misunderstandings that have been so prevalent among NCC member communions about us," said R. Adam DeBaugh.

"The meeting was a very beautiful experience for us all," said Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull.

NGTF TOLL-FREE 'CRISISLINE' TELEPHONE NUMBER 800-221-7044

The National Gay Task Force, has, through the generous assistance of local organizations like Chelsea Gay Association, opened its toll-free CRISISLINE, a national telephone number which will be used to compile nationwide statistics on homophobic violence, and to provide callers with access to local hotlines and support services.

Kevin Berrill, Violence Project Coordinator, said at the October 6 opening of the CRISISLINE, "Anti-Gay violence in America is increasing. Until now, there has been no way to show the dramatic rise as a national figure. NGTF is using its resources and its recognizability factor in the Gay/Lesbian community to provide a national hotline to put the overall picture of homophobic violence into focus." The CRISISLINE will also give callers information about groups/projects/hotlines in their communities, and in some instances will provide limited referral information about A.I.D.S. hotlines and clinics.

The NGTF CRISISLINE is open weekdays from Noon to 6:00 pm EST, and is staffed by volunteers who have undergone rigorous 'hotline training.'

CALVARY continued from page 11

rather than limit *any* of the Persons of the Godhead, we have simply named Them.

4. A. Since "Christ" is simply the Greek word for "Messiah," and *not* Jesus' surname, we have inserted the article "the."
   B. The humanity/divinity of Jesus are explained below.

5. The nature of the Holy Spirit is defined below.

6. Because the further explication of the second and third Persons of the God head are important to the understanding of same, we have continued our statement with them, and relegated the Bible to our fourth statement.

7. Genesis 1:27.

8. By combining the definition of the Holy Spirit found in the Korean Creed with that found in the Fellowship's statement of Faith, we feel we have retained the essence of both, while providing greater clarity.

9. A. We feel this wording allows for the variety of interpretations of the Bible's place / importance / meaning which are present in the Fellowship.
   B. See also note 4A, above.
   C. "as recorded" was added for further clarity.

10. The variety of understanding about the word "grace" led us to adopt this revised wording, which we feel clarifies while retaining the basic meaning.

11. We equate forgiveness of sin with healing of attitudes which lead to separation of self from God, self and others.

12. It was the feeling of the group that No. 6 and No. 7 of the Fellowship's Statement of Faith were in the nature of exhortation rather than of statement; we have, therefore, incorporated most of the essence of these divisions into our No. 5, No. 6 and No. 7 in order to continue a "statement." We have included No. 8 directly from the Korean Creed as being an important aspect of our belief structure, which seemed to have been overlooked in the Fellowship's Statement.

Ploen named GC XI Coordinator

Richard Ploen, a former Elder in UFMCC, has been named Coordinator of the 1983 General Conference in Toronto, Canada. Ploen came to the Fellowship in the formative days of the first church in Los Angeles. He was the first minister to offer his services to Rev. Troy Perry.

Ordained in the United Presbyterian Church, Ploen has his Master's degree in Christian Education from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia and a Master of Divinity Degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He served on the mission field for three years in Omdurman, Sudan, Africa.

Ploen became very active in the early Church and was soon elected to the Board of Directors. Appointed chair of the Christian Education Committee he began the Discussion Groups, Therapy and Sensitivity groups and founded the Crisis Intervention Program. He was appointed by Perry to a committee to form the By-Laws for the new denomination. At the first General Conference in September 1970 in Los Angeles Ploen was elected one of the first Elders.

Realizing a need to provide clergy for the groups that were springing up all over the country, he discussed with Perry the possibility of starting a school for the Fellowship to train its own clergy. In 1970 he founded Samaritan Bible School and became its first dean. Classes were begun in October 1970 at the 17 room house on Virgil Street in Los Angeles. The response was so enthusiastic that two streams of classes had to be run at the same time.

Subsequently, Ploen developed the correspondence course for Samaritan and continued to donate his time as dean, trustee and teacher. He wrote membership class materials for General Conference in 1972 and deacon and student clergy class materials for the South West District in 1973.

Ploen served as Clerk of the Board of Elders for the years 1970 to 1973 and as Assistant Pastor of MCC Los Angeles and Associate Pastor of Christ Chapel MCC in Santa Ana, California.

Ploen comes to his new post with excellent qualifications. For the past 16 years he has been in university work and participated in large district and national conferences three times each year.

After his first day on the job, Ploen commented, "I'm excited to be working with the Fellowship again and the wonderful people in the Church and especially being given the opportunity to serve God in this important work."

Richard Ploen

Eastern Clergy Conference

Eastern Clergy Conference will be held this year at the new facilities of MCC Ft. Lauderdale, Monday, February 14 through Thursday, February 17.

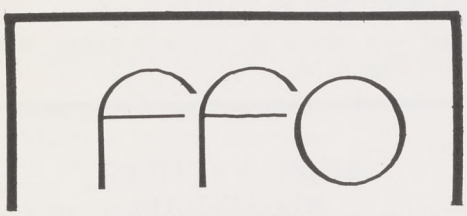
MCC Ft. Lauderdale will be providing housing upon request and the registration fee will include all programs and lunch daily.

There will be two featured emphases of this Clergy Conference. Rev. Kenneth Martin, a doctoral student at the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco, and pastor of MCC in the Valley and faculty member at Samaritan Education Center, will present his seminar on "The Minister as Sex Educator and Counselor."

He gave a brief version of this seminar at Western Clergy Conference which was enthusiastically received.

The other emphasis will include a program and speeches (to be announced) on the ministry of "Inner Healing."

The Clergy Conference coincides with Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, and will include an Ash Wednesday service and time for reflection, renewal and sharing with friends and colleagues.



Following Western Clergy Conference, 20 elected lay and clergy representatives from 10 Fellowship districts met to work on the directives for Faith, Fellowship and Order. This large representation included at least one representative from all but one district in the United States and both Canadian districts. (Missing were the Northeast, both Australian Districts and World Church Extension representatives.)

A full report of the meeting will appear in the February issue and in upcoming months JOURNEY will publish articles by FFO representatives toward a Christian Theology of Sexuality.

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AUSTIN continued from page 3

this offering: "For the first time in my life, (I think), I find myself stuck for words!! I realize that our world hasn't yet invented the words to express what we feel about the offering from MCC Austin. I guess all we can say is: We Praise, simply Praise our Lord JESUS for your love and generosity -- more than a few tears of Joy have been shed in Liverpool today."

"MCC Liverpool has been a small Family of God -- last year in May we had five members, now, Praise God, we have 15, a 300% growth in 12 months."

"In Liverpool at the present time only four people in 10 are working, unemployment and the world recession has hit hard -- 75% of our family are unemployed with little or no prospect of work. However, we are so blessed with many people who are willing to use their time and talents, giving freely in Service of Jesus. Do you realize the MCC Austin's offering amounts to almost 1/2 the yearly income of MCC Liverpool?? – Our weekly offering, generously given, amounts to approximately $25!!"

"There are so many things we want to share with you, not least of all our feelings of Fellowship, Unity and Love – in fact we are busy right now getting together photographs, newsletters, etc., to send. This letter is the first of many, Praise the Lord!!" "OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED!! Your letters, our feelings of solidarity and unity, all wrapped up in one big package of Love from MCC Austin are the result and answer."

"Some of the money donated will be used in a careful and considered way to improve our religious and spiritual life through educational courses and this will be an investment in human resources for the future. Our outreach in Liverpool and the provision of premises will all be looked at in a new way."

Rev. Troy Perry called as a result of the offering to the T.V. program and all of this together made for a flood of tears of joy in the Austin service as the letters were read.

As October approached, another "5th Sunday" month, it was decided to do the same thing and give away the offering, only this time we decided to give away every "5th Sunday" offering. Again, the dilemma of where to send the offering. One of our members happened to catch a T.V. documentary about the tragic unemployment rate in Liverpool and the economic crisis facing the people there and once again, God placed Liverpool on our hearts.

This time we would designate the offering to be used to help those who had desperate financial and material needs. General offerings in October were lower than usual and we began to worry that we would not be able to send as much to help our brothers and sisters in need as we had in August. This offering would be shared with prisoners in Austin at Christmas time, also, so we really prayed for a substantial amount since the needs were so great. The amount of offering, again, $1,000!! Praise God. Need we concern ourselves with amounts. It was as though God was saying, "Trust Me, I know the needs far better than you do and I will supply the amount needed to cover those needs." What happened in Liverpool as a result of this offering can only be appropriately expressed by sharing with everyone parts of the letter from Margaret Simpson, Worship Coordinator in Liverpool:

19th November, 1982: "When I announced once again your generous donation on Sunday there was a stunned silence. People just didn't know what to say, including me! Then the buckets of tears started to flow. Praise God. At last we have the resources to reach out to people as never before. We are so Blessed to know you. Let me share with you what your money has already done. We have bought a fire for the Sanctuary. We are in the process of buying some new Hymn Books.

Would you believe we now have not got enough to go round!! Several articles for the Sunday services have been purchased, too, before we had to make do and ment. We still have money left over for a very important part of our ministry. We believe the most important, that of reaching out to our sisters and brothers in the Gay and Lesbian community who do not yet know the Love of God in Christ Jesus -- I will keep you posted of all the developments. I'm sure there will be many.

From your second donation, the one that really floored us, and our Sanctuary floor, too, the tears very nearly started off a torrent of 'dry rot,' but, thanks be to God, not in our hearts! We are going to buy a gas cooker for a member of our congregation who has had to cook on a camping stove for so long that he never wants to see a baked bean or sausage for several years to come. If only you could have been there to see his face when we told him the good news.

Secondly, we are going to buy some warm clothes for winter for whoever needs them, and possibly other items, too. I believe you have an equivalent in the States called the Deacon's closet. The second donation of yours will be placed in its own separate bank account to be used specifically for relieving the needs of people who need practical help in their lives, i.e., the cooker, food or help with electricity bills.

We think there could be quite a few this winter, but with your money at last we can not only give prayerful support, but immediate practical help, too, which sometimes is so important to be able to give right away, and to follow that with prayerful supoort.

You are all in our hearts and minds daily. We are praying especially that God will richly bless you . . . we are trusting in that, and we claim a new church building for you in Jesus' Name."

We in Austin do not know what God has in store for the next "Mission Sunday," but we do know that we look forward to sharing now as never before. The blessings we have received because of sharing are too numerous to count, and each time we read letters from Liverpool, we cry, we Praise God, and we are grateful that God touched Rev. Wakeford to teach us the importance of sharing with those who are brothers and sisters, most of whom we will never meet.

As a result of the second offering the congregation truly feels the words of Jesus when He said in Matthew 25:35&36, "For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me . . . ."

LESBIAN ACTIVIST REGAINS JOB

A decisive victory over the closet was won in Seattle, Washington when city officials signed a court order committing themselves to reinstate Clara Fraser to a high level job at Seattle City Light. Fraser, a Lesbian with a long record of labor and civil rights activities, was fired in 1975 because of her sexuality and her socialist-feminist politics.

King County Superior Court Judge William Goodloe ruled that Seattle City Light had violated the city's Fair Employment Practices Ordinance and awarded Fraser a settlement of $135,000 in back salary, damages, lost benefits and legal fees.

NEW YEAR continued from page 2

HAVE AN OLD FASHIONED NEW YEAR

Jerusalem. Let us begin our own new projects for God this New Year's Day. Do we need to rebuild our foundation: a church built on Jesus Christ? Because of the false gods in our lives we may have found ourselves in captivity to foreign elements. Is it not time to throw off those distracting issues and get back to building our own Christian testimony and proclaim to the world that Christ is our Sovereign?

We alsc find some institutional models for celebrating the new year in the Old Testament. We find that Hezekiah sanctified the temple on New Year's Day (II Chronicles 29:17), and Ezekiel saw the sanctuary being cleansed on New Year's Day (Ezekiel 45:18). What better time to begin the cleansing process of our church than on New Year's Day?

During the old year we have collected all kinds of garbage in our churches: political maneuverings, non-functioning committees, non-meaningful worship practices, personality conflicts, etc. It is time to clean house and begin the new year with a clean house of God.

When we clean out all the garbage, we suddenly begin to find new visions. It was on New Year's Day that Ezekiel saw his vision of Egypt being conquered by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezekiel 29:17). Egypt had been an enemy of Israel, but so had Nebuchadnezzar. So Ezekiel began to see how Israel's enemies were going to help them out. That surely speaks of a visionary faith.

Without all the garbage in our churches, what visions might God grant us? Will we see the various enemies of UFMCC melt away? Will we see UFMCC growing to a large spiritual force in the world? Who can limit the possibilities? Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

Let us therefore learn some of the Old Testament methods of celebrating the new year. Perhaps then we might wish each other, "Have an old fashioned new year."

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*W.C.E.

*World Church Extension
February 13, 1983

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